



Town of
Westford
Massachusetts

Town Manager's Newsletter

February 2015



Jodi Ross,
Town
Manager

jross@westfordma.gov
www.westfordma.gov/tm
978-692-5500

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Notices and Information
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Hydrants
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Town Meeting Voter
Registration Deadline
March 6, at 8:00 PM

Annual Town Meeting
Saturday, March 28



Watch
Meetings Online
westford CAT
community access television
www.westfordcat.org

Dear Westford residents,

It is with a heavy heart that I dedicate this month's newsletter to Rajiv Paluri. Rajiv, the beloved son of Srini and Radhika Paluri, brother to Riya, died in a tragic ski accident at Nashoba Valley Ski Area on January 17th. Rajiv was just 13 years old, and an 8th grade student at the Blanchard Middle School. He was an excellent student, well-liked by all, loved sports, and was also an avid fan of our Boston sports teams. According to his father, Rajiv loved the snow, especially snow skiing, but other sports as well including soccer and basketball. He greatly enjoyed attending sporting events, but most of all he loved Westford. His parents needed a larger house and Rajiv was adamant they continue to live in Westford. After speaking with his dad yesterday morning, we agreed that perhaps all the snow we have been getting, along with the Patriots superbowl win, would be making Rajiv smile. In my opinion, perhaps Rajiv has had a "hand" in both! The Paluri family is interested in creating a permanent memorial to Rajiv and establishing a foundation/scholarship fund of sorts. If anyone is interested in participating in these projects, designed to keep Rajiv's memory alive in our town which he loved so dearly, please email me directly at jross@westfordma.gov.



I hope you are managing well with the heavy snow fall we have experienced lately. Our town's emergency management team and town staff, particularly the Highway Department employees, have been working diligently to maintain safe roadways and continue to provide our public services. For winter weather updates or emergency management updates, please to check the town's website frequently at www.westfordma.gov, or tune in to AM 1630, our town's emergency radio broadcast station. You may also subscribe to receive email updates of our public notices at the follow link: [Public Notices](#). These avenues will keep you up to date on trash/recycling delays, closures/delayed openings of town offices, parking bans and other important information. We have called on the National Guard to help us dig out our fire hydrants, but I strongly urge all of you to ensure yours are located and uncovered if you are able.

As of February 1, 2015, the Board of Selectmen approved the following solid waste pickup changes:

- a) Reduction in units of trash collected weekly from 5 barrels to 3 barrels
- b) Reduction in the price of bulk stickers from \$10 to \$5
- c) A request that residents purchase smaller barrels when their current receptacles need to be replaced

(continued on next page)

I would like to remind all residents about our upcoming Annual Town Meeting on March 28, 2015. The voter registration deadline to participate in this Town Meeting is March 6, 2015 at 8:00 p.m. Please contact the Town Clerk's office if you are interested in registering. You may also visit the following link to access the Town Meeting documents as they become available: [ATM 2015](#). March's newsletter will outline the articles that will appear on the warrant.

At their February 3rd Board of Selectmen meeting, the board voted to support the recommended proposal from the Permanent Town Building Committee and Fire Department Center Study Committee to design and construct a new Fire Station on Boston Road, with an estimated project cost of \$12.8 million. This project is contingent upon Town Meeting approval and the passage of a debt exclusion ballot question. In addition to this recommendation, these committees are recommending we combine Fire and Police Dispatch into one entity, to be located in the current Police Department training room. The estimated cost of this project is just under \$900K and would be bonded within the levy limit. Public meetings are being held to continue reviewing these recommendations.

The Selectmen authorized my office to seek competitive bids for the natural gas supply for municipal buildings. The bids came in significantly lower than the National Grid default rate, and we have entered into a two year fixed price contract with Direct Energy Marketing. We are expecting to save approximately \$120,000 per year in municipal expenses for natural gas as a result of this new contract.

Through the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments, we applied for and were awarded a District Local Technical Assistance VIII grant to support an Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT) and to conduct a Villages Rezoning Study. The \$4,500 for the EDSAT program will allow us to contract with Northeastern University's Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy to examine how we compare with other communities in many areas, including tax rates, permitting process, available space, and other categories.

The Selectmen voted to proceed with the foreclosure on 12 North Main Street, the former Westford Anodizing site. They intend to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Tax Possession Sales Committee with respect to transferring custody to the Board of Selectmen at Town Meeting, and to seek a waiver of rights of redemption from existing property owners. The Selectmen also support seeking Community Preservation Act funds for a historic preservation and feasibility study of the 12 North Main Street property. The next 12 North Main Street Task Force meeting is on February 18th at 2pm at the town hall, and we will be also holding an evening meeting on February 26th to allow plenty of time for questions and comments from the public. Information may be found at: www.westfordma.gov/12northmain.



12 North Main Street (former Westford Anodizing)

(continued on next page)



At the February 10th Board of Selectmen meeting, our State Representative Jim Arciero, the Selectmen, other town officials, and I recognized long time employee and volunteer George S. Fletcher for his lifelong service to our town. George has served in various roles including the Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, Personnel Advisory Committee, and a variety of other task forces and committees. He also served as Deputy Fire Chief, Animal Inspector, Dog Officer, Code Enforcement Officer, and Sealer of Weights and Measures. In addition to these services, George has dedicated over 40 years of his life as caretaker of

East Boston Camps. George was presented with a town chair, citations, a certificate of appreciation from the Selectmen, and received a standing ovation from an appreciative crowd.

I am excited to report that Westford was featured in the latest publication of Commonwealth Magazine for our solar projects. Here is the link to the full article: <http://commonwealthmagazine.org/environment/the-solar-disconnect/>.

The Board of Selectmen recently appointed several residents to a newly established [Town Farm Property Task Force](#). This task force is charged with studying potential uses and opportunities for the Town Farm property, including the Town Farm barn and storage building, located at 35 Town Farm Road. The main building is currently occupied by the Westford Recreation Department and the other buildings are being used for storage purposes. The Task Force shall conduct site walks of the property and public hearings at which abutters, members of the general public, town staff and town board/committee members are invited. The Task Force's primary goal will be to evaluate the potential options for the site and to make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen including things such as renovation costs, lease potential, razing of structures or other options that would benefit our community.

There are several openings on other local boards and committees, including the Bylaw Review, Communications Advisory, Cultural Council, Historical Commission, Public Works Initiative Committee, and others, and I urge you to peruse our website for information about the work of these committees. If you have interest, please complete a Citizen's Activity form at this link: [Citizen Activity Form](#) or stop by and fill out a form in the Town Manager's office.

Would you like more detailed information on Board of Selectmen meetings?

Click here to access: [Board of Selectmen Documents](#)

Click here to access: [Board of Selectmen Meeting Videos](#)

Our Fiscal Year 2014 Annual Town Reports are available at Town Hall and may also be downloaded from our website.

Spring is coming!

Sincerely,

Jodi Ross
Town Manager

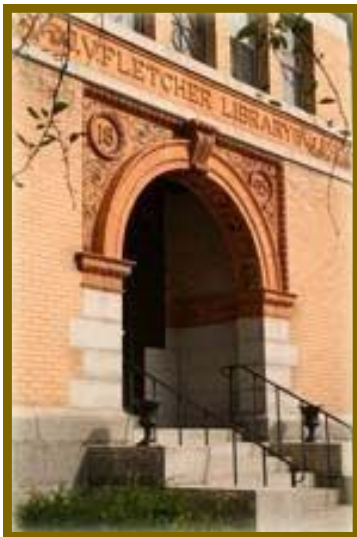
J.V. Fletcher Library

TREES AS OLD AS TIME

Recently, one of our patrons told me that searching for ancestors on his “family tree” started out as a hobby, became a passion and now is a full-blown obsession.



As a public library should, we support the ever growing number of Westford patrons who come to the Library to research, explore and discover information that they would not be able to unearth otherwise, or at great cost. Our genealogy databases are a welcome and well used resource, especially “Ancestry.com Library Edition”. One of our newer finds, “Access Newspaper Archive” contains the full text of thousands of historical newspapers. While “American Ancestors” offers data that is New England specific, such as: Massachusetts Vital Records through 1910; New York Probate Records (1787-1835); Social Security Death Index and more. “HeritageQuest” connects researchers to the U.S. federal census, family genealogies, local histories, tax lists, vital records, city directories, land and probate records, genealogy and local history serials and more!



Since four of the six databases are only available for use on terminals in the Library, the Reference Staff is available to help you navigate the databases, scan exciting finds and sometimes to be the first person who shares your excitement over a discovery.



WWW.WESTFORDLIBRARY.ORG

WWW.WESTFORDMA.GOV

Council On Aging - Coming Events

ST. PATRICK'S DAY LUNCHEON

Wear your green and come join us for our Annual St. Patrick's Day Luncheon on St. Patrick's Day, Tuesday, March 17th at the Franco American Club. Doors will open at 10:30AM with the traditional corned beef and cabbage dinner served around 11:30 AM.

Reserve your seat by March 5th by calling 978-692-5523.

The \$7 fee is due at the time of registration. Non-resident fee is \$25.

You will not be registered until payment is received.



CANCELLATIONS

When school is cancelled due to impassible and dangerous snow, ice, etc. then the Cameron Van will not operate and all activities at Cameron are cancelled.

Cameron will operate those days as a drop-in social warming center.

Meals on Wheels and Congregate Lunch are cancelled when Greater Lawrence Vocational School is closed. Watch Fox channel for the Greater Lawrence Vocational School closings.

LUNCH

The Merrimack Valley Nutrition Program provides anyone age 60 and over with nutritional meals at Cameron, Monday – Friday at 11:30 AM.

Call 978-692-5523 a minimum of two days in advance between 8:00 - 10:00 AM to make your reservation.

The donation is \$2.00. If spouse/partner is under the age of 60, the meal cost is \$4.50.

**To view the complete
Council On Aging Newsletter
please visit our website at:**

www.westfordma.gov/coa and click on [Newsletters](#).



Recycling Commission

RECYCLE TO THE MAX TO LOWER TOWN TRASH COSTS

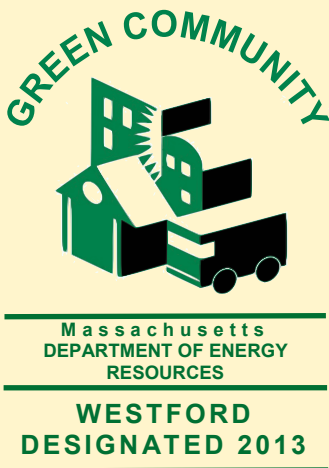
The Town of Westford pays \$70 per ton of trash picked up and delivered to the incinerator. These are precious tax dollars that literally go up in smoke. However, there is NO additional cost per ton of recyclables picked up at curbside. To lower personal trash output, recycle EVERY clean glass bottle and jar, metal can, plastic container (#1-7, not #6 Styrofoam), piece of paper and cardboard, aluminum pie pan, flattened box, and old telephone book and spiral notebook. Specific recycling information: www.westfordma.gov/recycling.

OPTION TO BUY A RECYCLING TOTER

All yellow and black recycling toters used by Westford residents were provided by Integrated Paper Recyclers (IPR) and are owned by IPR. No more of them will be available. If a homeowner moves, the yellow and black toter must stay with the home.

The Westford Recycling Commission offers green 64-gallon wheeled recycling toters for sale. This is an option for residents, not a requirement. If you want to purchase one, send or take a \$45 check made out to the "Town of Westford" to the Town Clerk, 55 Main Street, Westford, MA 01886. Include your name, address and phone number and you will be contacted.

You can also use any sturdy container for your recyclables with a "RECYCLABLES" sticker affixed to it. FREE stickers are available at the Town Clerk's office or you can send a SASE envelope to the Town Clerk and a sticker will be mailed to you.



**The Westford Recycling
Commission thanks you
for reducing,
reusing, and recycling!**



Water Department

2015 Rain Barrel Sale (It's never too early to think about spring!)

The Westford Water Department is pleased to once again partner with The Great American Rain Barrel Company to provide rain barrel program. Rain barrels can be purchased on line. Visit the Great American Rain Barrel Company website at <https://www.greatamericanrainbarrel.com> and click on "Shop Community Programs" and click on "Westford" (this link is also available through the Water Department website at www.westfordma.gov/water). The deadline for purchasing rain barrels is May 28th at 5:00 pm, and pick-up will be on Wednesday June 4th from 4:00-6:00 pm at the Water Department (60 Forge Village Road).

Rain barrels are a great way to conserve water and have a ready supply of temperate water for gardens. The attractive barrels offered in the sale are 100% recycled, come in 3 environmentally compatible colors, 40% of retail price, are heavy-duty, and will last Indefinitely.



Homeowners can easily connect the barrels to their downspouts and significantly offset their watering needs. In this region there is typically 16" of rain from May 1st – September 30th. For every inch of rainfall a 1000 square foot surface can collect 620 gallons of water, which means that over the course of the extended summer months an average roof of 2400 square feet could see more than 20,000 gallons of fresh rainwater passing over its surface from May through September. That is a pretty significant source of water that homeowners could be tapping into for free. Just keeping a small 10' x 10' garden irrigated during the summer months can mean using up to 1700 gallons of water.

Clearing out Fire Hydrants (...but it is still winter)

The folks at the Water Department would like to express our sincere gratitude to the people of Westford who've been diligently clearing their local fire hydrants during this exhausting succession of snow storms. We are very pleased with the amount of help we've been receiving during an exceedingly active winter season (and hopefully the worst of it is over!). With over 1,000 hydrants in town any help we can get from our customers is truly appreciated. Our crews start digging out the hydrants as soon as each storm ends – but without your help we would have a hard time getting all of them cleared in a timely fashion. If you don't know where your local hydrant is you can use this [new interactive map](#) that shows the location of the town's hydrants.

-Thanks for the outstanding job Westford!

Planning Board

Proposed Zoning Amendments - The Planning Board has opened the public hearings on these matters, the next hearing on these proposals is **Tuesday February 17, 2015**. Held in the Town Hall second floor meeting room (MR 201).

Changes to Section 3.6 - Nonconforming situations These proposed changes make the Zoning Bylaw clearer about the type of process needed when someone wants to change a use, structure or lot that does not meet the current standards in the Zoning Bylaw. An example of this might be when someone wants to put an addition on an existing house on a lot that does not meet size standards. New land use case law as well as a lack of clarity in the current bylaw are the main reasons the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals want to make these changes.

Changes to Section 9.4 Site Plan Review The existing Zoning Bylaw does not include a simple process for very small changes to existing development that already obtained Site Plan Review approval or are very small projects. These changes provide a simpler process through staff review or public meeting review by the Planning Board. An example of a project that might trigger such simpler review would be to reconfigure a parking lot to improve efficiency. A strict reading of the bylaw would have such a proposal go through a 90-day public hearing process with notice to abutters within 300 feet and legal advertisement in the newspaper. The proposed changes add rules for simpler procedures including thresholds and approval criteria for administrative and minor site plan reviews.

Changes to Zoning Bylaw to add Massage Therapy as an allowed use in commercial areas Currently Massage Establishments are prohibited in all districts. Massage uses have been allowed as accessory to other principal uses, such as a massage therapist who is part of a doctor's office or where the massage establishment received a Use Variance from the Board of Appeals. The proposed changes would allow Massage Establishments by right in the Commercial Highway (CH), Industrial Highway (IH), and Industrial A (IA) zoning districts. The definition of Massage Establishments is also proposed to be updated to match state regulations and require all massage therapists and facilities to be licensed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This amendment was suggested to the Planning Board by the business community.

Find the online [Planning Board agendas here.](#)

Town Clerk's Corner



Census Forms have been mailed!

Please return them as soon as possible. If you did not receive one, please download a blank census form, print it, fill it out and return it to us.

View the [2015 Census Newsletter](#) for lots of useful information about elections and open seats, the winter parking ban, stormwater management, sharps collection, Tax Relief program for Elderly and Disabled, Veterans information and Library planning and design grant news.

[Voter registration forms](#) are available online if you are not yet a registered voter at your address or wish to change your party enrollment. To be eligible you must be a U.S. Citizen and at least 18 years of age on or before the next election/town meeting.



2015 Dog Licenses are available and required for dogs over the age of 6 months. Don't wait until the late fee kicks in! The grace period for dog licensing ends on March 31st. There are many convenient ways to license your dog [in person](#), [by mail and online](#).

Nomination papers for the **May 5, 2015 Town Election** are available at the Town Clerk's Office for [several offices](#).

Find [2015 Candidate Information](#) if you are considering running.

Voter Information: Mark your calendars!

- **Annual Town Meeting: Saturday, March 28, 2015**
- **Annual Town Election: Tuesday, May 5, 2015**

Health Department News



FREE CPR/AED TRAINING



In honor of American Heart Month the Health Department and the Upper Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corps will offer residents 2 separate CPR/AED classes which will also cover choking for adults, child and infant. The class is being offered for free through a grant from Circle Health/Lowell General. It will be held on February 26 and a second class will be held on March 5. Both will be taught at the Millennium School – Conference Room B. **Class sizes are limited so call 978 692-5509 to book!**



HAND-WASHING DEMONSTRATION AT NEXT GENERATION CHILDREN'S CENTER

Just in time for flu season, the Westford Health Department's Health Agent, Rae Dick and intern Alana Barrett recently provided a hand-washing demonstration for six preschool and kindergarten classrooms at the Next Generation Children's Center in Westford. The hands-on demonstration for each child included hand-washing education with coloring pages, and certificates for all the participants. Each classroom's teacher also received a laminated hand-washing poster for their classroom.



GUIDING GOOD CHOICES PARENT PROGRAM BEING OFFERED

"Guiding Good Choices" is an exciting and interactive program for parents of middle school students. The course will give parents the skills they need to ensure the future well-being of their teen by learning to communicate effectively. Topics and discussion include: providing specific steps to develop strategic conversational guidelines with your teen; assisting parents in developing family guidelines and expectations for behavior; conflict management and the strengthening of family bonds; help parents increase teen involvement in the family; provide parents with 2014 Westford Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data; and help to facilitate creating a parent support network. The class is 4 sessions and will be held on April 8, 15, 29 & May 6 at the First Parish Church and is Free. This course will be taught by Kathy Bowen, Certified Life Empowerment Coach. Call Ray Peachey at 978-399-2528 for more information.



Health Department News (continued)

WELL CHILD CLINICS

A well child clinic will be held on March 12 from 7-8 am at Pediatrics West. Immunizations and physical examination are offered to those from infancy to school entry ages. Included in the exam are vision, hearing, blood pressure, and urine. Lead screening is done when appropriate. **Not for sick children. Appointments are required 1 week prior to date; please call 978 692-5509 to schedule.**

SHINGLES CLINIC

The Westford Health Department is pleased to announce a no cost shingles vaccination program made available via generous funding from Lowell General/Circle Health, Emerson Hospital, Westford Charitable Foundation, Friends of the Cameron Senior Center, Whitney Herrick Foundation and Westford Rotary. If you have ever had chicken pox, as most adults have, you are at risk of developing shingles. This is because the Herpes Zoster virus stays in your body and can resurface at any time. One in 3 people will experience Shingles in their lifetime. The Zostavax vaccine is a one-time vaccination for people age 60 and older and was developed to help prevent the painful and potentially serious episodes of Herpes Zoster (shingles).

The shingles clinic will be held on March 12 from 1-3 pm at Town Hall. The clinic is free but appointments and a phone pre-screening are required.

Call 978-692-5509 to schedule.

FOOD ALLERGIES

Food allergy is a growing public health concern. Please come learn about food allergy testing, food allergy avoidance and treatment of food allergic reactions. Dr. Sara Narayan and Dr. Priyal Amin from Allergy West, will share their time and expertise to discuss this important topic. The program will be held on March 12th from 7-8:30pm at the Town Hall. **Pre-registration recommended.**

Allergy West

A practice of Pediatrics West, PC

Please call the BOH office at 978-692-5509 to register by March 7. This program is co-sponsored by Emerson Hospital and Allergy West.

Health Department News (continued)

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS INFORMATION

We hope you made it safely through the blizzard of January 2015! Because we are still facing the rest of winter, this is the ideal time to evaluate how well you fared during the last storm, and to update your level of preparedness. Here are some tips from the Health Department.

Everyone can benefit from a good **communications plan**, which should be part of your 72-hour kit. See www.Ready.Gov for links on how to stay informed, make a plan, build a kit, and be ready for emergencies. **Please remember starter kits can be purchased through the Health Department for \$45**

Those with **medical needs** should always have a three-seven day supply of their medications available. Medications should be kept in one location in their original containers; listing the name of the medication, dose, frequency, and name of the prescribing doctor. Those who rely on electrically powered medical equipment should always have a back-up power source – such as a battery or generator – to maintain power for beds, breathing equipment, infusion pumps, and the like.

Those who use **oxygen** need to have an emergency supply that is also sufficient to last for at least three-seven days. Oxygen tanks should be securely braced so they do not fall over. Call your medical supply company regarding bracing instructions. If you use breathing equipment, have a minimum three-seven day supply of tubing, solutions, and medications. It's also helpful to maintain an **Emergency Medicine Bag** with supplies and medications. The bag should include copies of vital medical papers, such as insurance cards and power-of-attorney documents.

Clear out all furnace outlets/dryer vents/and car tail pipes to ensure no back up of Carbon Dioxide. Keep generators outside!

If your home loses power for an extended length of time, be cautious about the potential for spoiled foods in your refrigerator or freezer. A good rule of thumb: "When in doubt, throw it out."

Finally tune in to **AM 1630** for updates on Westford's emergency activities, including shelter openings. Also visit www.westfordma.gov and click the link for information at the top of the page.

**Additional emergency preparedness information can be found on the
Health Department website:**

[www.westfordma.gov/pages/government/towndepartments/boardsandcommittees/
WestfordMA_health/EmergencyInfo](http://www.westfordma.gov/pages/government/towndepartments/boardsandcommittees/WestfordMA_health/EmergencyInfo)

Health Department News (continued)

UTILITY AND EMERGENCY INFORMATION

National Grid Electricity: For power outages: 1-800-465-1212

Service: For customer service call 1-800-322-3223 National Grid (Electric)

Cable and Phone Companies: Comcast 1-800-COMCAST (1-800-266-2278)

Verizon 1-800-837-4966

Natural Gas Utility Company: National Grid (Gas) 1-800-233-5325

TUNE INTO RADIO STATION 1630AM FOR UPDATES FROM WESTFORD EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Weather Related Emergency Information: If you are in need of emergency shelter call the Police or Fire Department (978) 692-2161.

Extreme Weather Emergency: In the case of a extreme weather emergency, please see below for important safety information:

- **Do not touch or go near any downed wires. Report down wires to the Police.**
- **Do not park your cars on the road**
- **Do not travel. Stay off the roads**
- **Keep home heating vents clear of snow**
- **Check on your neighbors, especially the elderly**
- **In the event of a power outage call National Grid at 800-465-1212**
- **Do not call 9-1-1 unless you have an EMERGENCY**

Ice Safety Precautions: As temperatures drop, and bodies of water throughout the area begin to freeze over, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) has issued information regarding safety precautions to be taken on our frozen lakes, rivers and ponds. Please check out the MEMA website at: www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/mema/

Roof Collapse & Storm Drain Safety Information: If not cleared off, dry, fluffy snow piled on roofs can act as a sponge, absorbing any additional sleet and rain, adding weight and stress to structures. Additionally, MEMA encourages citizens to clear storm drains in their neighborhoods to minimize local flooding problems from this run-off.

Westford Fire Department



Firefighter Bill Stone Retired on January 17, 2015 after 42 years.
Thank you for your service.

